REMARKS

OF

HON. J. M. MASON, OF VIRGINIA,

ON

THE COMPROMISE MEASURES.

DELIVERED

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COMPROMISE MEASURES.

The Resolution of Mr. FOOTE, of Mississippi, declaring the Compromise Measures to be a final settlement of all the questions growing out of the subject of domestic slavery being under consideration—

Mr. MASON said: Mr. President, I do not know that I should have taken part in the debate on this resolution, but that I have thought it proper, and perhaps necessary, to place myself right upon some questions which have arisen heretofore, and were adverted to at a former period by the Senator from Mississippi, [Mr. FOOTE,] in reference to the action of certain Senators from the Southern States, myself included, upon the bill for the reclamation of fugitive slaves, which passed during the last Congress, and which formed one of that series of measures which some gentlemen term the compromise. In order that I may be distinctly understood upon this question, I will ask the permission of the Senate to read the remarks made by the Senator from Mississippi during the present session, so far as they refer to it. Those remarks, as reported, were as follow:

"It is also not forgotten by me, and I hope that it is not forgotten by the Senate either, that this particular act would have been passed by the two Houses of Congress at a much earlier period of the session before the last than it was, but for the fact that it was not deemed politic by certain Southern Senators, who had special charge of the subject, to report a bill for the reception and restoration of fugitives from service until it should be ascertained that all the other questions connected with the subject of domestic slavery were likely to be satisfactorily disposed of in Congress. The Senate will remember my former exposition of this matter here, and cannot have forgotten my statement of an important matter of fact connected with this delicate point, when I declared, in hearing of honorable Senators from the South, who could not deny the truth of what I said, that the honorable Senator from Michigan, [Mr. CASS,] and other Senators from the States of the North, now present, and whom I could easily name, requested me to see the Senator from Virginia, [Mr. MASON,] and the Senator from South Carolina, to whom I am now replying, at a very early day of the session then in progress, and to urge upon them both the importance of their reporting a bill without delay which, when it should become a law, would secure full justice to the South in regard to fugitives from service, pledging themselves to vote for any bill which should be thus reported, which should be free from constitutional objections. The motives of honorable Senators in not reporting this bill earlier I have never arraigned, nor do I on the present occasion. They were doubtless conscientious in their action, though I thought them at the time injudicious in the course adopted by them, as I still do; the reason given me for delaying the reporting of this bill, that if the question involved therein should be satisfactorily adjusted at that time, it might prove impossible thereafter to rouse the border States to energetic action in cooperation with the other Southern States, for the vindication of their essential rights, never having been considered by me to be of a character sufficiently solid to entitle it to operate potentially upon the deliberations of Congress."

Such is the reference made to this subject by the Senator from Mississippi, as contained in the report from which I read. He said there, and said correctly, that a like reference had been made to the same subject at a former time, his purpose being then, as it was the other day, to show that those Senators who it was supposed had the most particular charge of the bill adverted to, had not brought it forward or pressed it upon the consideration of the Senate in such a manner as the Senator from Mississippi, and those Northern Senators with whom he advised, deemed it became them to do. I have looked back to his former reference to this subject, and desire now to give a history of the action of the Senate on that bill, and of the agency of those having it in charge, so far as the same has been questioned by the Senator—that series of measures to which I have adverted, and which is called "the compromise." It is well known that this batch of measures had been aggregated into one bill, called, after the fashion of the day, the "omnibus," and that from being overloaded, or the passengers quarreling by the way, the omnibus broke down, and each measure was left to take care of itself. They were separated. A great effort had been made to keep them together. But it failed; and each bill stood upon its own merits. The bill for the admission of California passed August 13, 1850. It had on the day previous been ordered to a third reading. On the same day it passed, a motion was made by the Senator from Illinois, [Mr. DOUGLAS,] chairman of the Committee on Territories, to take up, as next in order, the bill providing a government for the Territory of New Mexico. The Senator from South Carolina, at the head of the Judiciary Committee, [Mr. BUTLER]—the committee that reported the fugitive slave bill—interposed, and said that, according to his view, the bill for the reclamation of fugitive slaves had the precedence, and should be taken up next in order. It was at that time that the Senator from Mississippi took the first notice of what he supposed, and it would appear yet supposes, to have been some delinquency, either on the part of the Senator from South Carolina, who had reported the bill, or on my part, I having introduced it, in pressing it upon the attention of the Senate. The Senator from Mississippi stated, on that occasion, as he has

stated now, that at a former period of that session he had been specially applied to by some Senators from the northern States, among whom he instanced the Senator from Michigan, [Mr. CASS,] who had suggested to him to confer with those Senators who had charge of the bill, upon the propriety and expediency of bringing it forward and urging its passage; that he made that application to me, amongst others; and that it was declined. I do not recollect such application, though I have no doubt of the fact, as the Senator from Mississippi has said so. But I have just as little doubt that various conversations took place between the Senator and myself, and other Senators and myself, upon the expediency and wisdom, as things then stood, of bringing on this fugitive slave bill in advance of the other measures with which it had been connected, and urging it upon the attention of the Senate. What my reply to him was I do not know. I have no doubt, however, if the Senator's memory is accurate, that he has reported it correctly. I shall come presently to that.

I wish to show now from the record, because I am desirous that it may go before the country, what steps were taken in reference to that fugitive slave bill; how they progressed, and where they terminated. I have had reference to the register, and find that on the 3d of January, 1850—a very early day after the Senate met—I gave notice of my intention to introduce that bill. It was introduced January 4th, and on the same day, on my motion, was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. January 16th the chairman of that committee reported it to the Senate. January 22d I offered an amendment to it, which, at my instance, was laid on the table and printed. I should say, however, that on the 16th of January, the day upon which the chairman of the committee reported the bill, it was on his motion made the special order of the day for January 23d, one week off. On the 23d, as appears from the register, other business interposed, and, on the motion of the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, the special order was deferred until the next day. On the 24th the bill was debated pretty much at length by the chairman of the committee who reported it. The Senate on that day adjourned until Monday, the 28th, when I engaged in the debate and spoke at length on the bill. On the 29th, (the next day,) the very distinguished Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. CLAY,] whose absence from the deliberations of this body, and its cause, we all deplore, introduced his resolutions for the purpose of covering all the subjects then before the Senate arising out of the institution of domestic slavery, and on his motion they were made the special order of the day for the 5th of February, six days off. On that day, the Senator from Kentucky addressed the Senate upon the subject of his resolutions, and continued that address during the next day, occupying the 5th and 6th. The debate continued on these resolutions, and on the 13th of February the honorable Senator from Mississippi [Mr. FOOTE] gave notice that he should at an early day, move for a special committee to which the entire subject should be referred. On the 25th, the debate still continuing on those resolutions, the Senator from Mississippi moved this reference. The debate then continued upon the resolutions of the Senator from Kentucky, and upon resolutions of like character offered in the mean time by a Senator from Tennessee, [Mr. BELL,] in connection with the motion made by the Senator from Mississippi to refer them.

Now, as to the fugitive slave bill, I have said that it was made the special order of the day for January 24th; that it was debated by the Senator from South Carolina on that day; that the Senate did not again sit until the 28th, when the debate was continued by myself. On the same day (the 28th) the Senator from New York [Mr. SEWARD] informed the Senate that he had been requested by the Senator from Ohio [Mr. CHASE] to ask that the further consideration of the bill be postponed. The reason assigned was, that the Senator from Ohio desired to be heard upon it, but that he was called from the city by illness in his family. It appears, however, that a Senator from New Jersey, no longer a member of this body, [Mr. DAYTON,] obtained the floor, but did not continue the debate. Thus it was, that the law for the reclamation of fugitive slaves, which had been introduced at an early day of the session, and promptly and actively carried on through its various stages, lay in repose, after the 28th of January, for reasons which I am about to assign to the Senate.

The Senator from Mississippi says, according to his recollection or his construction, that there was a policy on the part of the gentlemen who had charge of the bill, in thus keeping it back. I think I have shown, that up to January 28th, whether there was a policy or not, the bill was not kept back, but was urged and pressed upon the consideration of the Senate. I have shown that on the next day (the 29th) the resolutions of the Senator from Kentucky were introduced, and that the debate continued upon *them*, together with the motion to refer, up to the period to which I am about to advert. On the 13th of March, the resolutions of the Senator from Kentucky and of the Senator from Tennessee, in connection with the motion to refer to a special committee, being still under debate, a Senator from Connecticut, no longer a member of this body, [Mr. BALDWIN,] moved that all matter in the resolutions relating to the State of California be excluded from that reference. I have no doubt that many Senators, who were present then, will recollect that there was a strong and prevailing inclination on the part of gentlemen *opposed* to the reference, to except certain favorite measures of theirs from it. This California bill was one of them. Upon the proposition to exclude it, a Senator from Massachusetts, no longer a member of this body, but at the head of the Department of State, expressed himself strongly in favor of keeping *it separate*. The Senator from Michigan [Mr. CASS] expressed himself favorable to the plan of reference, but said, "My hopes are not strong as to any favorable 'results to grow out of this committe e. The 'chances have been much diminished by the vote 'taken on yesterday, if that vote contained any 'indication of the feeling in this Chamber with 'regard to the committee itself, and the be nefit 'to result from it." The vote to which the Senator from Michigan had reference, was a vote taken the day before on the motion of the Senator from Mississippi to take up the resolution, and his motion to refer, which proposition to take up was carried by a majority of two votes only, the vote being 24 yeas to 22 nays. From this the Senator drew an unfavorable augury as to any

benefit to result from the committee proposed to be raised by the Senator from Mississippi. The Senator from Michigan went further, and said: "I 'am sorry to say that I can anticipate very little 'good from the proposition of the Senator from 'Mississippi. For myself, I am not prepared to 'say what my views will be upon this whole mat-'ter; they are not formed. I say merely, that this 'course holds out some hope, and is therefore well 'worthy of adoption." And he goes on to say: "We have been three months here, and what 'have we done? Nothing. We have not passed a 'single law of the least material importance. We 'have occupied the whole time by the discussion 'of this question, and no practical result has been 'attained; and present appearances do not indicate 'that such a result is near. But though we have 'done nothing, we have ascertained that some 'things cannot be done"—referring to the fact, that in his belief the Wilmot proviso and Missouri line could not pass.

As a part of the same debate he went on to say: "Well, then, Mr. President, if these things are 'impossible—if they cannot be done, it remains to 'inquire what it is in our power to do. My own 'opinion is, sir, that we should take up the bill for 'the recapture of fugitive slaves, reported by the 'Judiciary Committee. I am disposed to suspend 'all our discussion, and to lay aside all other busi-'ness, with a view to act upon that bill," &c.

It was to this idea, thus thrown out in debate at that time, when the honorable Senator from Michigan expressed his apprehension, because of the vote taken the previous day, and for other reasons, that no good result was likely to follow from this committee, that it would be better to lay aside all the pending business of the Senate, and take up the fugitive slave bill, and act upon that alone,—it was to this stage of the proceedings that the Senator from Mississippi had reference, I presume, when he said that he had had a conversation with the Senator from Michigan, and other Senators, who had expressed a desire to have this law taken up; and that he consulted with the chairman of the Judiciary Committee and myself, and we differed from him in opinion. I shall not discuss the question as to who was right and who was wrong in our decisions as to the expediency of carrying out the suggestion of the Senator from Michigan. I know I considered in my best judgment that I was right, and that he was wrong; and I acted accordingly. What was the state of things? The resolutions of the Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. CLAY,] I think some eight in number, were intended to cover the whole ground then agitated before this body. The seventh resolution had immediate reference to this fugitive slave bill. It is in these words:

"7th. *Resolved*, That more effectual provision ought to be made by law, according to the requirements of the Constitution, for the restitution and delivery of persons bound to service or labor in any State, who may escape into any other State or Territory of the Union."

The proposition of the Senator from Mississippi was to refer the resolutions of the Senator from Kentucky, and everything contained in them, to this special committee, which committee, by its deliberations on all the subjects thus connected, might be enabled to present such a series of measures as would tranquilize and quiet the public mind upon this entire subject.

The resolution to refer was in these words:

"*Resolved*, That the President's message and accompanying documents, on the subject of admitting California, be referred to a special committee of fifteen, (afterwards amended to thirteen,) to be chosen by ballot, whose duty it shall be to consider the same; and also to take into consideration the various propositions now before the Senate relating to the same subject, in connection with the subject of domestic slavery in all its various bearings; and to report, if they find it practicable to do so, a plan for the definitive settlement of the present unhappy controversy, and rescue from impending perils the sacred Union itself."

The resolution, then, was to refer the whole subject, embracing the resolutions of the Senator from Kentucky and of the Senator from Tennessee, to this committee, for a great, practical, and wise end; requiring of the committee to report such a series of measures, embracing the whole subject committed, as would tranquilize the public mind, and make a final disposition of the subject committed. I went for it earnestly and zealously. There were some Senators from Southern States—one of whom, I more especially recollect, was the very illustrious Senator who then in part represented the State of South Carolina, and who is now no more, [Mr. Calhoun,]—who thought it would be better to defer raising that committee until the debate had ended. I differed from that distinguished Senator with great diffidence and great distrust of my own judgment; but I differed, and believed that it was our duty—a duty we owed to the subject and the country—to take the "chance," as expressed by the Senator from Michigan, of some good resulting from the deliberations of such committee. As the best evidence of the opinions of Senators representing slave States on the expediency of raising this committee, I advert to the fact that on the vote which startled the apprehension of the Senator from Michigan—the vote of 24 to 22 on taking up these resolutions—of the 24 yeas 17 were from the Southern States, and only 4 from the Southern States were in the minority of 22. I advert to this for the purpose of showing that those Senators who represented slave States, including, of course, those Senators who more immediately represented the fugitive slave bill, went for the committee, and in every instance voted for the reference. There were Senators who were against it altogether. A very distinguished Senator from Missouri, no longer a member of this body, (Mr. Benton,) was against it. Certain it is that he made strenuous efforts to except from its action the admission of California as a State into the Union. That exception was first moved by the Senator from Connecticut. The Senator from Missouri afterwards attempted it in the form of instructions to the committee, that they should not deliberate upon it. Further: the Senator from Wisconsin [Mr. WALKER] moved to except from the reference to the committee this very fugitive slave question. I have a memorandum of it in my notes, showing that on the 18th of April, he moved to except from the reference "such parts" of the resolutions "as related to the capture and return of fugitives from service or labor." The vote was taken by yeas and nays, and the proposition was rejected by 17 yeas to 27 nays. Amongst the 27 nays was one Senator alone representing a State holding the institution of slavery; that was the Senator from Missouri, (Mr. Benton.)

I adduce these facts for the purpose of showing that it was the policy of those with whom I acted

upon the fugitive slave bill, to let that subject go along with the rest to the committee. It was embraced in the resolutions of the Senator from Kentucky, directly, by a separate and independent resolution. It was embraced in the proposed reference of the Senator from Mississippi, in comprehensive as well as in direct terms; and every attempt that was made to except any part of the general subject from that committee, was resisted by the almost combined vote of Senators from Southern States. I recollect perfectly—and doubtless other Senators recollect—that we considered it a matter of great moment that these questions should not be separated, if a committee was raised. I know, in reference particularly to the bill for the admission of California as a State, which I and some others looked upon as the most important in the whole batch, and against which our resistance was most sternly directed, every effort to exclude it from the committee failed by the vote of Southern Senators. And I would ask of the Senate, and of the Senators from Michigan and Mississippi, with what propriety, with what justice or reason—contending as we always had contended, that if that committee was raised, the whole subject should go to it—contending, as we had more especially done, that the question of the admission of California should go to it—could we have asked that this measure for the reclamation of fugitive slaves should be alone excluded? It would have destroyed the whole plan of operation, which, whether right or wrong, was that the whole subject before the Senate, affecting the institution of slavery in any manner, should be committed to that committee.

Mr. FOOTE, of Mississippi. Will the honorable Senator allow me to make one remark? I wish simply to state, that when I brought these facts to the attention of the Senate, upon which the Senator from Virginia has commented, my object only was to correct an impression that I feared might be made by certain remarks of the honorable Senator from South Carolina, [Mr. Butler,] in reference to the position in which he intimated, or at least suspected, certain honorable Senators to be, in reference to the enactment of any law upon this subject. It will be recollected that he complained, in a special and emphatic manner, that there had been a very decided reluctance shown by Senators from the North to doing the South justice upon this subject; and that upon the spur of the moment, and certainly without the least deliberation or concert, I simply rose and vindicated those gentlemen by a statement of the facts which have been referred to by the honorable Senator from Virginia. My object only was to show here, and to the country, for obvious purposes, and with the view of quieting feeling that already, I thought, had been too much marked with extreme excitement upon this subject, that the Senators from the North—of course I allude chiefly to my political friends in this body—had manifested a disposition to do full justice to the South upon this subject. I stated the facts with a view of doing justice to honorable Senators whom I recollected distinctly authorized me to have the interviews alluded to early in the session, in regard to this question of slavery. I never said anything on the subject with the view of causing any one to misunderstand the position of the honorable Senator from Virginia, or the honorable Senator from South Carolina, in reference to this measure. I have always taken it that every member in this body from the Southern States must have felt the necessity of some legislation upon this subject, more efficient than that formerly adopted.

Mr. MASON. My only object is, as is sometimes said by my friend from South Carolina, [Mr. Butler,] to take care of history—to have this matter correctly on record, and to vindicate, as for as may be necessary, myself and those with whom I acted, from any charge that we had been careless of our appropriate duties in reference to this fugitive slave law. It is thus seen that the motion of the Senator from Mississippi was designed to take the matter of this bill, together with its kindred subjects, from the Senate, and to carry them to a committee—a policy in which I fully concurred, and which was ultimately effected. One great and controlling purpose was, when that committee was raised, to except nothing from it, but let the whole subject go to it.

Thus it was, I apprehend, that the honorable Senator from Michigan, when, on the 13th of March, he proposed to take up the fugitive slave bill and act upon it separately, was, as he stated at the time, induced to do so because his hopes of raising the special committee had failed. He adverted to the close vote taken the day before, and declared his belief that no special committee could be raised; or, if raised, would result in no good. I take it for granted that the Senator from Mississippi thought differently; for he continued to press the committee, and eventually carried the measure. Whilst the motion to refer was before the Senate, we thought our original line of policy was the safest, and that the whole should be referred together.

Now, as to what particular views or opinions gentlemen held, or by what motives they were governed, either separately or collectively, I can, after so long a time, answer nothing. The record shows that we desired to except nothing from the deliberations of the committee.

Of the particular conversation referred to by the Senator from Mississippi, I have no recollection, though doubtless we had many. I do recollect that heretofore alluded to by the Senator from Indiana, [Mr. Whitcomb.] But what my answer to him was I do not know, except that I declined the proposition he made, because we deemed it injudicious and inexpedient to press the bill at that time. I should hold so still. I think it highly probable that it was frequently said in conversation, that it would be impolitic in Southern Senators to do it, lest, among other reasons, they should weaken their position upon other vital questions affecting the institution of slavery, then before the Senate. The Senator from Mississippi says, that the reasons assigned for declining a change of our policy was, lest by so doing we might find it "impossible thereafter to rouse the border States to energetic action in coöperation with the other Southern States for the vindication of their essential rights." This may very probably have governed us to some extent in our desire to keep the subject together. I should have deemed myself wanting in my proper duty as a representative of one of the Southern States, if I had done anything which might tend to weaken the position which the Southern States then held.

I trust I have thus shown to the Senate, and to the country, that so far as depended upon those to whom the fugitive slave law was more particularly committed, we were not only not wanting in our duty, but we did that which we deemed best for the occasion, and from which certainly no mischief has resulted, for the law ultimately passed in a most stringent form, without any very serious or decided opposition.

Mr. FOOTE, of Mississippi. It has ever afforded me the highest satisfaction on all occasions when the matter has been discussed, to state that I believe the whole body of Southern Senators had been perfectly faithful to the South on that subject, and that the honorable Senator from Virginia [Mr. MASON] and the honorable Senator from South Carolina [Mr. BUTLER] acted not only with fidelity to the South in reference to this matter, but with great energy, judgment, and skill. That has been my opinion, and I have always expressed it. I would never have undertaken to intimate the fact which I have stated, that Northern Senators urged, through me, earlier action on this subject than took place, but for the fact that certain remarks which fell from the lips of the Senator from South Carolina, [Mr. BUTLER,] if unreplied to, might leave the impression that Northern Senators generally had manifested most decided opposition to early legislation on this important subject. I rose simply for the purpose of stating the facts of the case, with the view of vindicating the secret truth of history which had not been previously revealed. My object was not to implicate the Senator from South Carolina or the Senator from Virginia, but simply to enable us to have a better understanding among ourselves, and to let my understanding among ourselves, and to let my constituents, and the citizens of the South generally, understand that there was a strong and earnest desire on the part of influential Northern members of this body to accord to the South all that the South could claim on this point. That was my sole object.

Mr. MASON. I have finished what I had to say on this point, but I do not wish to take my seat without saying a few words upon the resolution now before the Senate. What I shall say must be brief, from reluctance to detain the Senate, as well as from my present condition, for I am unfortunately so hoarse that I can scarcely speak at all.

The resolution which is now before the Senate is of a character which does not, in any form, address itself to my approbation. I can see no reason for it, and no occasion for it. As I understand it, it declares that, in the opinion of this body, the measures cited should be considered as terminating all questions arising out of the institution of slavery. Now, I am not aware that there is any State in this Union, except the State of South Carolina, which continues to protest against them. I am not aware of one of the Southern States, except the State of South Carolina, which has not declared, in the most emphatic manner, to the majority in this Government, If you will stop there, and execute in good faith the law for the reclamation of fugitive slaves, we will acquiesce in what has been done. That being the condition of the country, I can see no reason, no propriety, in further interference with the subject by the Congress of the United States. As to the measures themselves—the law for the admission of the State of California into the Union, the law for the abolition of what is called the slave trade in the District of Columbia, and the law for the dismemberment of Texas—I have no change of opinion to announce, no palinode to sing. I opposed them upon this floor by my voice and by my votes; and when they passed, I united with other Senators in a solemn protest against them. I retract nothing of what I then said; my opinions of them remain unchanged. But they have passed to the statute-book; they constitute a part of the law of the land. I have never counseled, and never shall counsel, my people to further resistance on account of these laws. If they are allowed to remain as they are, and are efficiently executed, there is no purpose or desire on the part of the people of my State to disturb them, hardly and unjustly as we have, in our opinion, been dealt with by their enactment.

Such being the general feeling in those States most seriously affected by these measures, where is the necessity, where the propriety of disturbing again the subjects they disposed of? As to the fugitive slave law, I do not entirely agree with the honorable Senator from South Carolina [Mr. BUTLER] as to the practical effect of that law. I am not aware (unless it be in the first instance which occurred at Boston) of any instance where the officers of the Federal Government, in the execution of that law, have failed to do their duty. I am aware that, notwithstanding what I really believe to have been the fair and honest purpose of those officers to execute the law, in two States at least it has been effectually resisted. I refer to the cases in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, and Syracuse, New York. What was there done is now the subject of judicial investigation; and I am content to wait the result of that investigation, before I form an opinion whether it is or is not the intention of those States to have the law enforced.

So far the law has done good. It has awakened public attention to the necessity of having its provisions carried fully into execution. It has attracted around it the patriotic feeling of a large and intelligent portion of the people in those States. The subject is yet pending, and I am not prepared to pronounce a judgment upon the result. I trust that I am not hoping against hope when I say that I believe, in time, and in good time, the sentiment of the people of those States will be *regenerate* on this subject. They will find that it carries with it a portion of their constitutional duty; and they will find, also, that it carries with it the safety of the Union. It has been placed upon that distinct issue by almost all of the Southern States, and among others by the State of Virginia; and I do not despair of that law yet doing its office effectually.

Then as to this resolution further. I had understood from gentlemen who voted for those measures as a compromise, that they were to be received by the country as the great tranquilizing measure of peace—to end the discord and ill feeling which always attend the agitation of the subject of slavery in our deliberations. I object to this resolution, because it is not the usual and proper mode of legislative action. Our functions are to express the legislative will of the country through the forms of law and under the sanctions of law. The resolution on the table has no sanction—none whatever. It is inofficious, and, for

whatever end introduced, its effect must be rather to renew agitation than to quiet it.

We are all aware that while these questions were pending the safety of this Union was most seriously endangered; but, in the language of Mr. Jefferson, I had hoped and believed that the billow which threatened us had passed under the ship. The public mind has become to some extent tranquilized. The people of the Southern States who felt themselves aggrieved by it, if not reconciled, are disposed to acquiesce; and in such condition of things, I submit, to what useful end should the subject be further agitated here? Sir, I did not sympathize in the slightest degree with what fell from the honorable Senator from South Carolina, [Mr. Rhett,] who addressed us yesterday and the day before, when he declared himself for disunion. There is no State which made greater sacrifices to obtain this Union than the State which I have the honor in part to represent. She has made another great sacrifice to preserve it, by her acquiescence in the measures which are referred to in this resolution. The transactions of the past Congress, so far as they may affect the institution of slavery, are with her matters done with and ended. For what has passed, Virginia does not seek disunion. None can look with greater horror than do her people upon disunion for disunion's sake. But the Union which they cherish must continue a Union under the Constitution. A Union by force, or a Union in which the forms of the compact are alone regarded, whilst the rights of the minority are violated, her past history shows she will be the first to repudiate and to disown.